

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1.(Currently Amended) A single- or multi-layered synthetic-based food casing comprising one or more layers, wherein the layer or at least one of the layers comprises an antimicrobially active amount of at least one metal salt.
2. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the metal salt comprises ions of silver, copper, ~~or~~ zinc and/or other metal ions having antimicrobial[[,]] ~~preferably antibacterial~~[[,]] activity.
3. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein ~~it is a said~~ food casing based on comprises polyamide and/or copolyamide.
4. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 ~~to 3~~, wherein the (co)polyamide is comprises an aliphatic (co)polyamide.
5. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 4, wherein the aliphatic (co)polyamide is blended with at least one partially aromatic (co)polyamide[[,]] ~~preferably at least one amorphous partially aromatic (co)polyamide~~.
6. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 5, wherein the fraction of the at least one partially aromatic (co)polyamide is no greater than 50% by weight, ~~preferably no greater than 30% by weight~~[[,]] ~~in each case~~ based on the total weight of all (co)polyamides.

7. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 6, wherein the fraction of metal salt(s) in the single-layered casing, or in a ~~correspondingly finished~~ layer of the multi-layered casing, is 0.005 to 4.0% by weight, ~~preferably about 0.01 to 2.0% by weight~~[[,]] ~~in each case~~ based on the total weight of the casing[[,]] or of the relevant layer in the casing.
8. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 7, wherein the fraction of metal ions is 0.0025 to 2% by weight, ~~preferably 0.005 to 1.0% by weight~~[[,]] ~~in each case~~ based on the total weight of the casing or of the relevant layer of the casing.
9. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 8, wherein ~~it~~ said food casing is multi-layered and at least the outer layer comprises at least one antibacterially active metal salt.
10. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 9, wherein ~~it~~ said food casing is tubular[[,]] ~~preferably also seamless~~.
11. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 10, wherein ~~it~~ said food casing is unstretched.
12. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 10, wherein ~~it~~ said food casing is biaxially stretched[[,]] ~~preferably also heat set~~.
13. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 12, wherein ~~it~~ said food casing is multi-layered and ~~the further comprises~~ layers are based on polyolefins, polyesters, poly[[([)]vinylidene chloride([)]], poly[[([)]ethylene-co-vinyl acetate([)]]] and/or poly[[([)]ethylene-co-methyl methacrylate([)]]].

14. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 13, wherein it said food casing has no more than 5 layers.
15. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 13, wherein it said food casing has a symmetrical structure.
16. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in claim 13, wherein it said food casing has an asymmetrical structure.
17. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 17, wherein it said food casing is presoaked ready-to-stuff.
18. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 18, wherein it said food casing has a wall thickness of 15 to 150 μm [[,]] preferably from 20 to 130 μm [[,]] particularly preferably from 35 to 90 μm .
19. (Currently Amended) The food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 19, wherein it said food casing has a diameter of about 20 to 200 mm[[,]] preferably 30 to 150 mm.
20. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of~~ claims 1 to 20, which comprises mixing a master batch which comprises about 5 to 40% by weight[[,]] preferably about 10 to 25% by weight[[,]] of at least one antimicrobially active metal salt with the remaining constituents of the casing or the relevant layer of the casing and then extruding or coextruding the mixture.
21. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim ~~21~~ 20, wherein the master batch comprises as support material a polyolefin[[,]] preferably a polyethylene[[,]] a

~~polypropylene[[,]] a copolymer having ethylene and propylene units[[,]] an ethylene/(C_{[[4]]}-C₈) α -olefin copolymer[[,]] a propylene/(C_{[[4]]}-C₈) α -olefin copolymer[[,]] or an ethylene/propylene/(C_{[[4]]}-C₈) α -olefin copolymer[[,]] or a polyamide.~~

22. (New) The method as claimed in claim 21, wherein said polyolefin comprises polyethylene, a polypropylene, a copolymer having ethylene and propylene units, an ethylene/(C₄-C₈) α -olefin copolymer, a propylene/(C₄-C₈) α -olefin copolymer, or an ethylene/propylene/(C₄-C₈) α -olefin copolymer, or a polyamide.